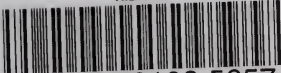


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# PARNASSUS

INTER-ARTS MAGAZINE  
OF  
NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

***Spring 1986***

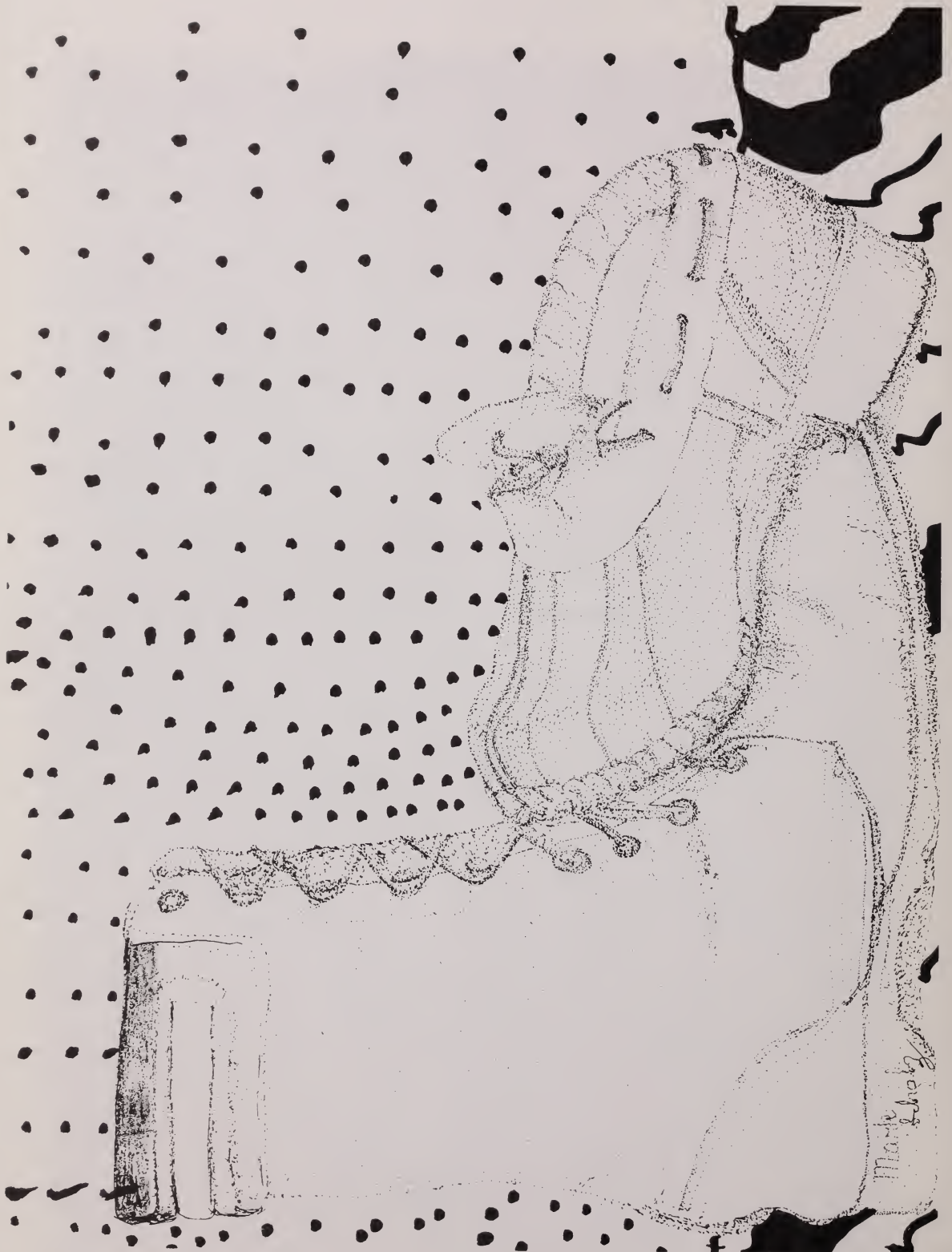
Parnassus is the name of the mythological mountain home  
of the nine muses who inspired humankind in the arts.

The policy of the editorial staff has been to select material for the magazine democratically. We have read each work submitted and viewed all artwork. We voted to determine eligibility: a majority vote for a piece meant publication. Parnassus provides an opportunity for new artists and writers to reach others; it's a showcase of student creativity.



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## TWO POEMS by Maureen Wimmer

### Cruiser

Today I saw a hawk  
riding the wind  
with a flock of swallows  
against a mottled sky.

One hundred to one  
they rose and dipped  
in unison as if drifting  
on the waves of some rolling sea.

Sailing wing to wing he flanked  
the bevy and when  
they banked, he banked  
and when they heeled, he heeled  
while his mate circled a conifer  
Waiting for Sunday to be done.

### Edgewater

I have come to this beautiful place  
Without you  
To have peace  
A solitude that sharing life  
With you  
Does not afford

To have not your singing sound  
In my left ear  
Your shining look  
In my right eye  
Your hand in my pocket

To have the porch at sunrise  
And the best old rocker  
And to row the boat myself

But  
Ah, Dear Girl  
I think to speak to you  
Every time I see some beautiful thing

# “Can’t Get To There From Here Unless. . .You Fly”

by Robert Heusser

“Flight Trans Worlds Airlines 1077 is now ready for boarding,” announced a seductive voice over the P.A. system.

“Sections A through G please line up at queue one for immediate boarding. Thank you.”

A third of the passengers in the waiting area stood up almost at once, grabbing carry-on bags, cameras, children and proceeded toward the queue. For most it was just another flight; for a few it was their first. John Stormer was one of the few, the scared, the nauseous.

John stood in the midst of the shambling crowd, brows dripping sweat, his white-knuckled hand clutching his briefcase. He stared out of the huge bay window at the gleaming red and white craft. The T.W.A. logo was large and ominous, seemingly returning his catatonic stare with sadistic delight, burning the unthinkable thought into his mind of flying “across worlds” with nothing above or below his soon to be airborne body. He tried not to think about it. But, the more he tried not to, the more he did which only made sense to his nerve-wracked mind because there was nothing else to think about.

“Sir? Excuse me, sir. Are you all right?” the attendant asked with concern.

“Huh? Have we landed yet?” John implored, still not able to take his eyes off the craft’s logo.

“No sir. We haven’t even left yet. We’re just---”

“Oh God, no! Please tell me we did and that I’m just getting on a shuttle bus to my hotel,” he said bordering hysteria.

The attendant thought to herself, ‘Jesus, this guy’s not flying with both wings.’ “Sir, may I have your boarding pass please?” He handed it to her but still made no advances toward the craft’s door.

The attendant hooked her arm around his and pulled him toward the door while reassuring him in the way a mother would a frightened child. “Come sir, it will be all right, we’ll have you seated and served a complimentary drink.” She sat him down and buckled him into the seat.

“Now I’ll be right back with your drink and some headphones so you can relax to some music.” She pattered off toward the galley, stopping here and there along the way making sure the passengers were buckled in.

John sat there shaking in anticipation of his first flight and what he thought to be his last. To one side of him sat a businessman, like himself, reading **Forbes 5000**. On his other side sat a little old lady singing along with some popular song playing through her headphones. He looked at her, momentarily distracted by her singing, which for a second annoyed him more than the thought of flying. “There is nothing worse,” he thought to himself, “than someone singing outloud, out of key, to some out of heard music!” He glared at her but she just smiled back and continued to sing.

The craft jolted, which subsequently jolted John back to the reality of impending flight. The attendant came back with his drink and headphones. He thanked her between gulps of New Classic Original Improved Coke II.

“Are you feeling better, sir?”

“Yes, a bit. Thank you.”

“You really have nothing to worry about. You know, this sort of travel is safer than any other type there is. Most of the navigation is done by computers and our pilots are the best; most of them have come from N.A.S.A. The flight will be over before you know it,” the attendant again reassuring him while she plumped a pillow for him.



"I'll take your word for it," John replied not so convinced.

"Are you on a business trip?"

"Yes I am. But why they had to send me, I don't know."

"Well don't worry anymore. We're about to take off so just sit back and relax." She smiled at him and then began to weave her way back to the attendant's cabin.

John tried to look out the window next to the little old lady. He couldn't see a thing—it was jet black outside and the cabin lights produced a startling reflection of a terrified man looking back at him. Suddenly, the fierce roar of the craft's engines could be heard and, much to the dismay of his stomach, felt. The craft moved on to the runway, stopped for a moment, and then accelerated at an incredible rate. And as John was pushed back into his seat by the incredible acceleration, his face turned to a strange shade of lavender.

The little old lady looked up at him and shouting above the roar of the engines asked, "Are you okay?"

"No," he said meekly.

"There, there. Don't worry. We're just climbing to altitude. It'll be over before you know—"

"I wish people would quit saying that, it sure doesn't inspire any confidence," he shouted back at her.

The roar suddenly stopped. The forces of acceleration stopped. John's heart stopped. He felt very light, too light, as if he were floating around under his seat belts. His eyes darted around; they were frantically searching for a reason as to why he was suddenly floating. They found none. So his mind found one; he had died.

"I told you it would be over soon," confirmed the little old lady as she sat there smiling at him.

"God, I am dead. You were right!" he said in amazement.

"No, you silly. We're still alive — we're just at altitude like I said we would be and we're about to get under way."

"I thought we already were — I mean. . . I thought. . ." John was becoming more flustered after each word until his mouth finally gave up for him.

"Look, they make this flight a dozen times a week, every week of the year, with a spotless record. Believe me, it's safe, safer than taking the monorail between Boston and New York. This is my twenty-first trip," she said nonchalantly with a wink.

"Really? Where you headed to?" he asked distracted by her comforting manner.

"Vesborne. I have relatives there. I've gone there every year since they moved there. I suppose you're headed for the Twin Cities?"

"Why yes! How did you know that?" John asked in surprise.

"That's the main business center of Proximii," she responded matter-of-factly.

"Of course. That makes sense, you've been there before. Speaking of which; how long does it take to get there?"

"A tenth of a second after we leave Earth's orbit and then another twenty minutes to dock at Rykker Spaceport—you'll like the 'port', it has some of the best shopping in the System," she smiled her smile at him.

"How far is it to Alpha Centauri?" he asked now with more curiosity than fear.

"Four light-years or about 230,000,000,000,000 miles," she replied knowledgeably.

"Wow!"

"Oh that's nothing, there's a shuttle flight to Sirius and that's five times farther than Alpha Centauri or about 1,200,000,000,000,000 miles from Earth. It takes a bit longer to get there, about two seconds excluding take off and docking."

John Stormer sat there in complete awe and wondered how someone could be so unawed. He looked down at the little old lady. She had put her headphones on and was singing outloud again.

"I wish she would stop that infernal singing!" he mumbled to himself through gritted teeth.

TWO POEMS by John Callahan

Meine Freiheit  
(for Sylvia Plath)

The ground is crisp  
and the concrete's cold stare pierces through me,  
it is more than just an autumn day.  
We wait, we watch  
for the sign to run towards  
the arms of freedom

The soldier turns and lites eine ziggarette  
his rifle bouncing off his body  
(and it was more than just an autumn day)  
our patience growing thin,  
our knees frozen to the ground,  
we wait for our chance to leave the D.D.R.

I stared boldly at the barbed wire grass  
surrounding the cold graves  
(and it was more than just an autumn day)  
of people shouting out for freedom  
from six feet underground  
"but it's the chance you have to take"

A black umbrella opens—the signal-Go  
we run, towards the gates of freedom  
(and it was more than just an autumn day)  
He turns and opens fire on us,  
and we fall from the hail of bullets.  
Then I looked up to the weathered cross and  
heard the shouts of freedom.

#22 dedicated to  
Our Lady who watches over our men at sea —  
alive or dead— with a loving eye.

I know it is  
winter  
The hard  
wind in the face;  
the snow; the sand:  
THE DEAD.

Yet  
I stay here in  
mourning  
at night, even god  
forgets me  
but I will stay  
perched here  
until the waves  
silence  
that darkest of time,  
when I will  
truly awake  
and kiss you Good Night.

so don't mourn for me

As long as there are  
seagulls riding the slow winds of the sky  
and mussels scraping  
the shallow sands of the sea,  
I know I'm alive.

“...A--men”  
by Peter H. Duncan

The congregation around the grave started to sing in somber unison, “T’was Grace that taught...”

“Nice shot Jeff,” I said, as the ball went through the hoop. We were playing a game of one-on-one, and for the first time ever I was winning! Over the past three summers we had played one-on-one at least twice a week and I had never won. Jeff did not seem to be himself during this game. I just could not believe I was winning fourteen to seven in a game to fifteen!

I faked a shot from the top of the Key, dribbled by him and laid it in for the winning point. Jeff slowly sat down on the grass and tiredly said, “Great game Pete.”

“...my heart to fear...”

Three weeks later, as I was watching television Saturday morning, the phone rang.

“Hello?”

“Pete?”

“Yes.”

“This is Mert, Jeff’s Dad. Jeff’s in the hospital. His leukemia’s come out of remission.”

“How is he?”

“They’re giving him Chemotherapy treatments for now.”

“Do you want me to come down?” I asked.

“Not right now; the doctors want to keep him isolated.”

“Thanks for calling, Mert, and keep in touch.”

“I will. Bye.”

“...And Grace my fears relieved...”

Marty, Buck, Jeff and I were all lying on our beds in the room we shared each summer, resting from the work we had done that day. We had baled, trucked and stacked three thousand hay bales in the barn in one hundred degree heat. Our heads could have been mistaken for hay bales when we finished. It took us about twenty minutes each to wash the hay out. So as we rested, we decided we had to do something about it. Buck, Marty and I decided to get crew cuts, but Jeff would not think of it.

“I love my hair and I don’t want to lose it,” he said. After the three of us had our hair cut, we looked at each other and started to laugh. Jeff just lay on his bed listening to the radio.

“...T’was Grace that...”

The sign on the door read “INTENSIVE CARE.” As I walked in, Jeff looked up from where he was lying and smiled. He was too weak to speak. It surprised me that he could smile at all. Tomorrow he was to have a bone marrow transplant because the Chemotherapy treatments had failed. He looked worse because of the treatments — his skin was blotchy and glossy, he had lost about fifty pounds and his hair...he had none.

“...brought me safe thus far...”

Two years later, Jeff was standing proudly with his arm around his bride in the reception line. He looked great! The bone marrow transplant had worked wonders! His weight was back to normal and his sandy brown hair was feathered back on each side of his head.

“...and Grace will lead me home...”

I had just gotten home from work when the phone rang. While hoping they didn't want me to come back to work, I answered the phone.

"Hello?"

"Pete, this is Buck."

"How's it going?"

"Pete, Jeff's dead..."

"When?"

"This morning. I tried calling earlier, but I guess no one was home."

"I was at work."

"The funeral will be Monday in Jaffery."

"I'll be there."

Why him I thought. He had not even been married two weeks.

"...A--men."

Buck and Marty stood holding their tearful wives after the benediction at the funeral. I was standing next to Jeff's widow, Pam. I still don't know if I reached to hold Pam to me or to hold myself to her. Maybe I did both.

## For Posterity

Sean Sullivan

Asleep, alight, both hot and cold  
Feeling young; can fear of old  
Too, close my eyes attaining sight  
Seen dark by day and light at night?

Looking here and seeing there  
Took a journey, went nowhere  
Let me out and bring me in  
Talk of virtue, practice sin

Wanting all, accepting some  
Pretentious though expecting none  
Satiated, hungry still.  
A strong desire lacking will

Angry so with History  
Paradox  
Posterity  
Remembering forgotten me  
My haunting,  
Knowing,  
Memory

Bear  
(for Zoè)

Ann Scott

Is he part of God?  
you ask, eyes shining with life  
at his prosaic form.  
Neither alive nor dead  
but something else entirely  
he is animated by love.  
Protector of your sleep  
since time began, he has weathered all  
your infidelities —  
Christmas dolls with pink seductive faces  
huge stuffed puppies  
candy colored ducks, giraffes and zebras.  
Bear is ever wise and patient.  
In his plain black way he well knows  
the vicissitudes of love —  
now a surfeit of kisses,  
then a week abandoned beneath a bed,  
still certain of his place in your heart.

Is he part of God?  
I cannot say, unwilling to answer no  
but the question weighs against the hour.  
Tonight he is the pivot  
of your spiritual doubt.  
He needs to know  
as you do  
if he's covered by omnipotent protection  
as the wind taps insistently  
against the glass, and the night closes in  
upon all creatures.  
Yes,  
I venture quietly  
as you tuck his head beneath your chin  
and sigh, yes,  
a part of God as one  
to another  
your spirits connect.  
Who am I to withhold this grace  
so easily given?

# Becoming a Woman

by Lucia Sawyer

The process of “growing up” begins with puberty. I was not prepared for it because my mother had never talked to me about sex or what to expect and since I was the first one in my group of friends to start their menses, I never knew anything about it.

The first day was very traumatic for me. I didn't know what was happening to me or if I had done something to myself to make me bleed. I was sure that I was bleeding to death and I was so scared. When I told my mother, she laughed! I felt so foolish and confused. Then she said, “You're all grown up now, and you'll have to stay away from the boys.”

Later that afternoon, my married sister came over and took me aside and explained everything involved with puberty — what to expect regarding my periods, sex, pregnancy and the emotions I was going to have to learn to deal with in relationships with boys. She then told me about her having a child out of wedlock, and that she didn't want the same thing to happen to me. Her child had been brought up as my brother and I have accepted him as such. In those days, having a child out of wedlock was a disgrace and the girls were whispered about, the child was called a dirty name.

Since I had always been a tomboy, I had been around the boys and had heard the jokes about “easy” girls. Add that to my mother reminding me that “men don't marry second-hand goods” and it became very difficult for me to have a close relationship with a boy, because I thought they were all after sex.

Dating but choosing never to go steady so I wouldn't have to deal with getting intimate with one special boy, I didn't have many boy friends. One boy that I had gone out with a few times got fresh with me and when I told him my views about premarital sex, he got angry and took me home. I didn't see him for three weeks. One night he called, very friendly, and asked me to the movies again. It ended up the same way! I thought he had accepted my views; he thought I had changed my mind. He called me oldfashioned and a prude, but that was the last time I saw him.

I might have been oldfashioned but I was human! There were times when my emotions were very difficult to overcome, but I did manage to draw the line.

After that episode I began to wonder if there weren't something wrong with me, not being able to get close enough to anyone to even consider having sex with. It did very little for my self-esteem.

One night, at a dance with friends, the subject of marriage and sex came up. I said, “I'm not ready for marriage, I'm having too much fun. I just want someone I can be friends with, no sexual strings attached.” One of the boys in the group said, “That's a deal,” and we shook hands on it. He said all he wanted was a “good dancing partner.” We began seeing each other and he was always the perfect gentleman and very considerate. He even brought me flowers on one occasion for no special reason.

With his patience and understanding I was able to set aside my negative feelings about having a sexual relationship. Six weeks after we shook hands, we were married, without having premarital sex. It was a joint decision, because he respected my views.

Since we could not afford a honeymoon, we spent our wedding night in my old room. Only now can I appreciate the smile on my mother's face when she had to change the bloody sheets the next morning. I had fulfilled my mother's dream for me. (Men don't marry second-hand goods). Her smile was her acceptance of me as a woman.

I still have that friend I shook hands with 28 years ago.

# Shadows of Yesterday

Words and Music by David Jordan

## (1st Verse)

*AM9*  
Will we ever find a way  
to slow the passing of the day?  
*DSUS7*  
Bide more time in which to see  
*AM9*  
the dreams we cling to desperately?  
*DSUS7* *FM*  
Find the strength to leave behind  
*BM* *CM7*  
the conflicts that plague our minds?

## (CHORUS)

*GM6* *Gb/B*  
Like shadows on the wall  
*EM*  
of yesterday...  
*GM6* *Gb/B* *EM*  
Shadows on the wall of yesterday...  
*GM6* *Gb/B*  
You can run but you won't  
*EM*  
get away

## (2nd Verse)

*AM9*  
Each and every setting sun  
leaves us one step farther from  
*DSUS7*  
The peace of mind we all once knew  
*AM9*  
when hearts were young,  
and thoughts were true.  
*DSUS7* *FM*  
Don't let time become your foe  
*BM* *CM7*  
Walk with it, let it go,  
*GM6* *Gb/B*

## (CHORUS)

Don't linger in the shadows  
*EM*  
of yesterday...  
*GM6* *Gb/B*  
Don't linger in the shadows  
*EM*  
of yesterday...  
*GM6* *Gb/B*  
Tomorrow you will find  
*EM*  
your way.

## (Bridge)

*BM* *DM*  
When all you do is sit there  
*EM* *BM*  
and watch your life go by  
*GM6* *Gb/B*  
you really have no right  
*EM*  
to cry  
*BM* *DM*  
I tell you I don't need  
*EM* *BM*  
a piece of your mind  
*BM6* *Gb/B*  
I want nothing from  
*EM*  
the blind  
*BM* *DM*  
For you I have no sympathy  
*EM* *BM*  
though I do think it's a crime  
*GM6* *Gb/B*  
tomorrow you'll be begging  
*EM*  
for more time



*(3rd Verse)*

*AM9*  
At times it seems so very strange,  
life and its constant change  
*DSUS7*  
wish it could remain the same  
*AM9*  
but that's not how we play  
the game.  
*DSUS7* *FM*  
If only we could find the light  
*BM* *CM7*  
to guide us through this wretched  
night

*(CHORUS)*

*GM7* *Gb/B*  
and out of the shadows of  
*EM*  
yesterday  
*GM7* *Gb/B*  
Out of the shadows of  
*EM*  
yesterday  
*GM7* *Gb/B*  
Will come a shining new  
*EM*  
day.





## Self-Portrait

It had been a very exciting time for me, the few hours each afternoon by myself, alone and quiet, just before the smell of cooked rice and the sour waft of adobo began to filter to the corner of the apartment, before the whines calling upon me to set the table for three, with the hard plastic plates and their faded leaf-green design, the complimentary grape jelly glasses, three forks and spoons. Even before the evening news and Howard K. Smith's editorial, there was silence.

I often retreated to my room in these hours and began by sitting on my bed and looking between the bars on the window. As the sky began to dim, and a rich navy and azure color settled in, the brick office building and the watertower adjacent to us became a silhouette. Then, just above it, in a skyscraper, whole floors of track lights would begin to turn on, one after another. Only after these events, would I stand to pull the curtain and shut off my view of the city outside.

My eyes would then begin to scan the walls of the room, with many areas highlighted by postcards and photographs, meticulously taped up with but a half inch separating each one. I had purchased the postcards as souvenirs in museum giftshops and had found others in bargain bookstores and stationary stores. The cards were largely composed of paintings done by artists whose identities and histories were of no real importance to me at the time, but, rather, whose images I had taken a liking to. Each piece, although different from another, seemed to give me a warm feeling inside.

When my father arrived, I briefly joined my parents at the dinner table. The air between us took on its accustomed silence, except for the soft impressions of mouths intent on chewing, spoons gently clacking with forks, coupled with weavings of the evening news broadcast. My father often looked at me with approval then perhaps confusing my quiet ethereal state with one that epitomized proper table manners, by showing utmost respect for the food before us. Not realizing this, I must have often approached the dinner table, in those early years, with a secret life burgeoning in my pockets.

After the meal, I completed the necessary acts of clearing the table, and gave the dishes their final ablution for the day, making sure to "wash the glasses first, so as not to distribute grease from any of the dishes or pans." Finally, after two or three washings of a rice-crusting pot, my step-mother gave me a very spare motion of approval, permitting me then to return to my room.

It was there that I became familiar with the subjects in some of the paintings by studying their features and gestures. I began to feel at home in the images of life breeding in each piece, their faces, graceful movement, the lightly cupped hands of lovers, and the young girl brushing her thick mane.

There also seemed to be room and freedom for me to travel in some of the work. Spurred on by a symphony of splashing water, as my father began to wash his garments in the bathroom sink, I often met with an adventurous monkey who raced with me along the branches of tangerine trees. At times, one could even watch cypress branches alive and dancing in the swirling night sky, explore the summer-scented gardens of Giverny, and lie in a velvet sofa, absorbed in the hissing song of a jungle.

Slowly, my curiosity began to lean towards the process of making drawings. For, it seemed very exciting to work quietly on a piece, seeking and applying lines, shapes, and color. I can't quite recall what sparked the event, but, one afternoon, I opened my closet door and squatted before a full-length mirror. Through it, I considered the reflection of my small room, the reproductions, pictures, books, and the cluttered bed. It seemed like a complete universe. I looked at myself, with a strange adolescent air of growing self-interest, folded a piece of paper in half, and proceeded to draw.

I carefully filled the paper with thin ink lines, black etches representing my face. I moved my hand very steadily around. The edges of my nose appeared, shaded nostrils, *filtrum*, and lips. I followed the line of my eyes, the rounded lids coming down at a curved slant. I blackened the pupils, but left a small hint of light.

I began to remember the trying day in Mrs. Malfi's class, our first exercise — the blind contour. We visually traced the giant leaves of a plant, the subtle green folds and branches. With the thick ebony in hand, we covered the huge white expanse, repeatedly, again and again training our hand and eye to act as one. And in that hour, there was complete silence.

Sheet after sheet was handed to us to utilize in the course of the year. I began to use them at school for the week's assignment and at home, for my own studies. I remember one day, hauling Bobby, my step-mother's two-year-old Japanese protege, to sit as my faithful, quiet subject. His face was a wonderful picture, a play between contrasts, with dark black bangs brushing against his puffy white lids, the perfectly round face, and between the protruding white cheeks, a nesting ground for his small nose.



These absorbing events stirred in me a great desire to seek the work of others involved in this quiet practice. I was very fortunate to have Mrs. Berne as a teacher that year, a very strong figure in my memory, for she often shared with us her ideas on clay, as she sat next to the wheel, pulling up the walls, centering the ball of clay, sitting, with her stomach full with child. We would listen to her with eager ears, her encouragements to explore the works housed in the neighboring museum, and seek out a world that held no barriers, that spoke a voice of every man, women, black, white, child and universal being.

I became attracted to the spirit of the worker responsible for each piece. I tried very hard to remember and make note of their name, their tribes, seek their histories — all the while under the influence of the intoxicating scent of warm human pulses.

I made every effort to attend retrospectives at the Museum of Modern Art, which gave rise to a full picture, a complete view of someone who spent long hours of their history concocting a world, always open to possibilities. That particular year was marked by Cezanne's presence through the groups of apples propped up like curved pencil lines housing swashes of red, orange, and yellow. There was also Calder's wonderfully crafted circus of sinewy performers dressed in glittering scraps, dancing and gyrating under the big top, as well as the very soothing music of O'Keefe's abstractions.

Each day began to slowly expand in its importance, slowly in realizing my capabilities and acknowledging the limitless possibilities. Yet, I don't really know exactly what it was about that time that made it so special — whether it was the dreams built upon the making of drawings, a common vision with those that were to be my role models, the quiet hours spent in solitude, or even the ability to send a spirit time-travelling. Perhaps, it doesn't even matter right now. For, although the making of art still holds much importance to me, as part of becoming a full woman and creative being, I've slowly come to realize that my work isn't necessarily rooted in the paint, the object, or even the material, but, rather in cultivating the thin silent spirit that is sweeping the peripheries of all my daily rituals and devotions.







TWO POEMS by Ann Scott

Fog Count

The line moves slowly along the corridor  
like a snake  
slithering toward its prey.  
Rubber soles pad, padding on the tile  
keys jangling from the matron's belt  
a cough  
a sigh  
a whispered word, and then  
a clanging door, explosion of swift feet  
pounding  
                    an echoing shout —  
"FOG COUNT!"  
The snake is still.

Across the prison yard the fog descends  
sinister, silent  
depriving the watchful eye of sight, it sends  
a chill down custodial spines.  
We are counted.  
Our numbers satisfy and again  
we move in serpentine grace  
to breakfast.



## Safe Among Crows

I see her again from the window  
running  
fleet, wanton, sure.  
The wind lifts her black hair, and  
it billows  
widens  
rises like a great sail over the languid  
haze.  
My shriveled spirit uncurls, leaps  
from its hiding, calls  
and she turns, wearing the face I  
dream of.  
Caught  
in my longing gaze her laughter fades,  
her eyes remember.

As she falls  
a furious cloud of startled crows,  
wings beating in wild alarm,  
rises  
forms a shadowy feathered arc  
and vanishes beyond the prison wall.  
The yard is silent under its blanket of  
fog.  
She is gone.

Tonight I will dream her  
running across green gold fields  
lost in sunlit hills and far away  
safe among crows.

## Sandy

So many years have flowed by,  
and you still pierce my mind.  
Images at odds with each other  
strive for control — despair and love  
locked in a never-ending struggle.

There you lie, your stiff body  
sprawled on the cold, hard tiles,  
razor blade clutched in your pale hand,  
long gashes expertly sliced down your arms,  
your unborn son, so near to birth,  
given only death.

Your life's reflection competes against death's.  
You peek around a corner,  
a halo of flowers, borrowed from a bride,  
encircles your head.  
An impish grin, the kind that only  
the young and carefree own,  
shines across your face.

We were made sisters,  
not by your marriage to my brother,  
but by that feeling within the soul  
which joins kindred spirits.  
We shared heart and mind, sorrow and joy.

Your life sparkled like sunlight  
dancing across the waves.  
Your death takes me down  
to the murky, muddy depths,  
there to dream of desolation and decay.

How can the soft gentleness of your life  
defeat that piercing visage of your death?

## TWO POEMS by Deborah Leone

Prize Winning Poem

### Hillsy's Pond

A well-traveled road touches one side,  
high tech firms, the other.  
The pond lays, dwarfed,  
closed in by humanity.

The waters drink in the waste,  
tires squat drunkenly in the muck,  
white, plastic baseballs  
bobble across the rippling surface.

Beauty stands amidst squalor:  
a Great Blue Heron  
still as a statue,  
feathers glinting with morning sun.

Indifferent to cars speeding by, to  
children waiting for their school bus,  
it cautiously stalks through reeds  
searching for a morning meal.

The long, graceful neck slowly  
thrusts forward, like a cobra  
swaying to an inner rhythm.  
The slender neck dips, capturing its prey.

Feeding done, the heron spreads wide its wings.  
Caught by gravity, long legs dangle.  
Straining, it breaks free and soars,  
its reflection fading from the mirrored surface.



Mark J. Messina 2/3/80

Mark J. Messina

### THREE POEMS by Jennifer Lee

For Jeremy 8/23/84

I've waded at  
the very edge of  
these banks,  
entranced by the  
beauty of the water,  
longing for its feeling  
but afraid to venture  
in.  
A current might  
take me,  
sweep me away,  
lost forever.  
But how gently your  
waves caress  
beckoning me further.  
I shiver.  
(Dare I go?)  
Waves lap at  
my knees,  
my thighs,  
my breasts.  
If I don't turn  
back now  
I'll be in over  
my head  
(Dare I stop?)  
"I can't swim," I  
tell you.  
"I'll carry you until  
you learn," you reply.  
I ride your waves,  
gentle spirals,  
up and down  
in your warm depth  
until your currents  
become too swift  
and I retreat  
to where I am safe,  
but cold.  
Shivering  
Not from the chill  
of the water  
but from the  
loneliness of  
shore.

8/85

I thought  
it would be easy  
being with Stephen.

Like spilling out  
Cracker Jacks  
to get the prize.

I didn't know  
I couldn't put  
all those old  
feelings  
back  
into that neat,  
little box  
and make it look  
untouched.

2/84

A season of myself passed  
in greyness.  
A stilled heart.  
Not a breath taken, so still.  
As if my time had ended  
here  
in rivers of frozen tears  
and brightly colored dreams  
whithered brown and  
swept away.

## The Matchmaker by Ann Scott

Elena lived alone in the big house on the hill across the road from my grandfather's house. The only other houses on Holland Road, besides theirs, were the three cottages owned by the Crowleys. They'd been spending their summers in Saugatuck for several years with two other couples, the Lathams and the Talbots. The road dead-ended into the Kalamazoo River. The three couples kept their boats in my grandfather's boathouse but other than that we didn't have much to do with them. The six of them had known each other most of their lives. That summer they must have been in their late twenties, except for John Crowley, who was closer to forty. There were no children. The wives always took painting lessons at Ox-Bow, the art colony that was nestled in the dunes above Lake Michigan a few miles away. Their husbands came up from Chicago every week-end to fish and relax.

Elena had lived in Saugatuck ever since her mother brought her over from Budapest as a young child. I can't say she was a pretty woman, but you couldn't keep your eyes away from her. She was a little slip of a thing with huge dark sorrowful eyes. Her hair grew nearly to her waist, thick and black and straight as rain, with a shock of white cascading through it. I never could look at her without thinking she'd been struck by lightning. She told me once it had gone white after her mother had drowned. She had a solemn look about her most of the time, and an air of waiting, waiting for her chance. Just after things got rearranged on Holland Road Elena cropped her hair off and took to wearing a brilliant smile. It was hard to tell how old she was, though I'd guess she was at least thirty that summer.

She kept mostly to herself and worked hard. Elena was a baker. She operated a pastry business out of her big old fashioned kitchen, and made a good living at it. When her mother died she was no more than fifteen, but she seemed to have her wits about her even then. She built up her business gradually. During the winter holidays she shipped pies and cakes all over the state of Michigan, while the Ox-Bow Inn kept her busy with orders through the summer.

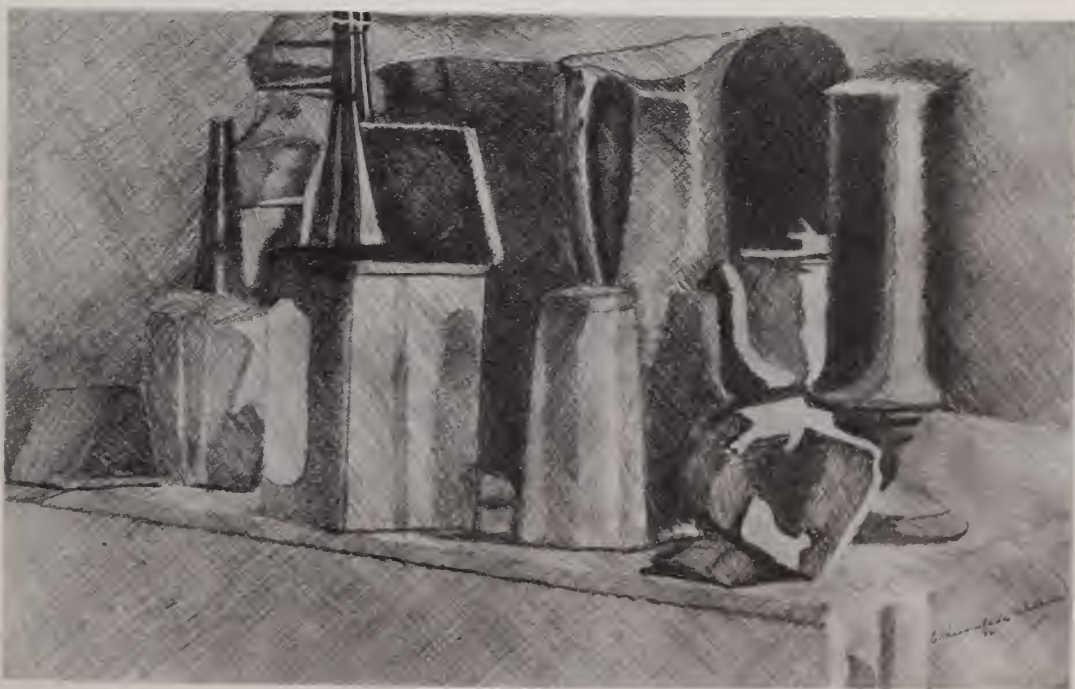
Saugatuck was a thriving summer resort back then. People came from all over the mid-west to study at Ox-Bow or to rent cottages near the lake. There was dancing three or four nights a week at the Inn. I used to watch from my bedroom window as hundreds of Japanese lanterns strung above the hotel's veranda dipped and swayed in the breeze, and I'd fall asleep to the music drifting across the river. I remember walking to town in the evening with my grandfather to stand around the shuffleboard courts, eating popcorn and watching the grown-ups play. During the long summer days there were holidaying artists everywhere, dressed in smocks and broad-brimmed straw hats, crouched on camp stools behind easels, squinting and grimacing at their canvasses. Sometimes one of them would ask me to pose, but I always made excuses. I was a child who hated to sit still.

I don't know when it was that Elena started telling people she was a psychic. I never heard a word about it until after she was gone, after the summer of '38, the year of the worst tornado Saugatuck had ever known. After Elena married and left town, people started talking about her having the second sight. People were saying she got her abilities from her mother, who'd been the most famous matchmaker in Hungary. She had travelled up and down the Danube to all the villages in the valley, sealing the fates of countless young couples. It was her unique ability to recognize "soulmates" that made her fortune, and it was this talent, they said, that Elena inherited. But I don't believe a word of that story. People will make up anything to explain the unexplainable. My grandfather claimed Elena's mother had been nothing more than a hypnotist's assistant in a travelling show, and the powers she left to her daughter were the powers of persuasion and a talent for shrewd timing.

I can tell you what happened that summer, but nobody knows how she managed it. Elena barely knew the three couples, except to sell them pastries now and then. Summer people didn't mix with locals as a rule, but catastrophies have a way of drawing people together. It was a day in late July when the tornado struck. It must have been a Saturday because the husbands had driven up from Chicago the night before. My brother and I were out in our rowboat on the river early that day. We'd put up the oars and were drifting when we noticed how deadly silent it was. The air was hot and close and there were none of the usual river noises. The eerie silence scared us, so we started singing and splashing and we dropped the oars and rowed back to shore as fast as we could. By afternoon the air was cold and the tornado arrived out of nowhere. With it came torrential rains that made the river rise at a dangerous rate. The cottages and our house had to be evacuated. My family walked into town and put up with some friends. There were three days of steady downpour and high winds, and it was four days before Holland Road was dry enough to return to.

Elena's house was high and dry. She walked down the hill in the middle of that first stormy night and called at each of the cottages, inviting them all to come up and stay with her. They had no other place to go. The Inn had been evacuated too, and they weren't on friendly terms with anyone in town. Still, it was a strange thing for Elena to do, as she was a woman who kept apart from her neighbors. They spent four days and nights together, seven of them under the same roof. When they finally emerged and climbed down the hill to their soggy cottages, one of them was missing. The following day they closed up the houses and drove back to Chicago, never to return. Rose Latham drove away with Henry Talbot. Maria Talbot drove away with Ed Latham. Anna Crowley drove away alone.

Six months later Elena and John Crowley were married. They sold the big house, the cottages and the pastry business to a retired couple from Minneapolis, and moved away to a farm in the wilds of the upper peninsula.



# Bilingual Expectations: Vietnamese and English

Phuoc Nguyen

Đã bao thu quê hương xa biên-biệt.  
Lòng nao nao-trong những áng mây chiều.  
Thường nhớ về người xưa thôn củ.  
-Đã cùng tôi khôn lớn thuở nào.  
Xác đất khách nhưng hồn tôi quê nội.  
Thân xa nhau tâm nối liền nhau.  
Ngày đêm luống những ngọn-ngào.  
Quê hương còn đó người sao muôn trùng.  
Muôn trùng sóng đại dương ta không sờn chí.  
-Đường ta di vạn lý chông gai.  
Mặc sống tuyết dôi mài, hoài bão.  
Quê hương ỏi ta Lai đảo dựng-xây.





Seasons have passed but still my homeland is far away.  
It hurts to see the clouds when the sun sets.  
I love and miss my old friends and my home.  
The people of the town where I grew up remain there.  
My body is here but my soul lingers with them.  
The days pass to nights — I feel so sad.  
My country, my people are a large sea away.  
Thousands of waves can't force my hopes forward.  
Thousands of difficulties...  
Our expectations are cultivated in the cold weather,  
But some day I will return to rebuild my country.

translated by Phuoc Nguyen and Kathleen Clairmont



## A Most Unforgettable Character by Christine Costanzo

Ten years ago, I met a most unforgettable personality in a lovely spot of lake and grass called Paradise Park. The park is located on the northern border which separates Reno, Nevada from Sparks, Nevada. Including the lake, the park comprises about sixty acres of some of the nicest, greenest, quietest and most pleasant public land in all of Reno.

It was on my very first visit to Paradise that I met the Pickpocket.

My husband and I had just moved into the apartments across the road from the park, and the landlady (her name was Rose) told me in a flowery voice that I could get some terrific French bread at the bakery down the street. Not only was the place open twenty-four hours a day, but if I showed up early I would get a great deal on the day-old bread (at twenty-five cents a loaf, no less!). At six the next morning I was at the door of the bakery.

Jack had already gone to work at the casino, so I decided to take my two loaves to the park to eat one. Even though they were a day old, they still had that crumbly-outside, soft-inside, sweet smell-of-yeast quality that I love French bread for. I brought both loaves because I had spotted some ducks on the lake, and I love feeding ducks.

I sat near the lakeside on a low stone which still had some of the desert night's coolness in it, and began eating the first loaf, tossing a few of the crumbs out for the waterfowl that began arrowing their way across the top of the still water with breakfast on their minds (their "birdy little minds," as Jack would say), racing each other like kids headed for an ice cream truck.

Then, just as the sun peeked above the desert hills behind me, I spotted what-to-my-eyes must have been the King and Queen of Paradise Park: the two most regal, graceful, and elegant white swans I had ever laid eyes upon. And they were headed straight for the crowd of quacking, honking, whistling, splashing peasantry before me, which by now had devoured the first loaf and was almost three-quarters through the second!

Fearing that the bread would be gone before the white wonders arrived, I quickly stood, tearing off a fair-sized hunk of loaf to save for them, stuffing the chunk into my back pocket next to my wallet.

I didn't realize it at the time, but the Pickpocket was behind me. Watching.

He waited until I hunkered down on both knees at the lake's edge to wait for "their Majesties," as if I were a serf bowing before approaching royalty.

Then the waiting thief made his move.

I failed to hear him step close behind me, but I did not fail to feel something slip into the back pocket of my jeans, lightly, gingerly removing the prize therein. Surprised, I spun on my heels to face the thief and recover my stolen property — if I could!

And then I gave back, startled by the face which was nearly nose to nose with my own. It was a jet-black face, with one beady, yet liquid black eye staring into mine. The head into which the eye was set was small, and there was a white patch upon the cheek, as if a one-inch brush loaded with white paint had stroked upward from chin to temple. The velvety head sat on a long black neck rising from a gray, brown and black feathered body. The mouth was a black beak, which was quietly working on the remains of the bread-crust. A soft whistling sound, like a tiny breeze blowing through a hollow reed, issued from the nostrils as the thief ate.

I almost laughed out loud. It was the smallest, runtiest, most audacious little Canada goose I had ever seen, and he had stolen, without the least bit of regret, my tribute to the park's obvious King and Queen.

At least, I *thought* it was obvious. But as I stared at the Pickpocket in disbelief, I heard a snort behind me, and I turned to see the two swans waddle clumsily ashore. They ignored me, however, their attention focused instead on the little thief and the rapidly disappearing bread crust.

But the Pickpocket didn't retreat. Instead, he calmly downed the last crumb of his booty, wiped his bill on his wing, lowered his ebony head, and charged past me to the attack, honking and hissing like the lead truck in a diesel convoy.

He was a black-and-gray windmill, flapping, pecking, beating his wings, until his pale challengers had retreated to the opposite shore in utter defeat.

Then he swam back. He stepped ashore in front of me, staring first into my face, and then at the heel of the bread, held forgotten in my hand. He came closer, whistling softly at me.

I handed him his due, my fingers trembling a bit as I did so, knowing in my heart that I had met the true King of Paradise Park.



“Hello.”

“I would like to . . .”

But, I don't quite understand these images that are  
filtering in my head.  
the streams of blood  
flushing through  
strained  
maternal lips  
a head expelled  
membranes prominent  
a baby's breath, sighing  
warmth  
the first day,  
the first day?

Of your last period?” she says.

No, not me  
don't think I'm one of those people  
goin' around returning some stranger's smile  
from the other side of the bridge  
confident  
that slim fox is gonna follow  
my  
proud  
tan  
hide.

But,  
you mean,  
my last?  
evening  
on the couch  
staring at ochre floral patterns, faded with sun's abuse  
spewing about  
a day of egg yolks  
hardened  
on some preppie's plate.  
the scraping,  
rinsing,  
steaming, then  
stacking  
like sisyphus, under myer's  
watchful eye.

You see, mam

“I would like to . . .”

I would like to find me a better job, you know.

One that’ll give me enough money to find me a nice place to live.

Do y’know what I mean by NICE?

One, that got a mailbox outside, with a KEY to open it and my NAME printed on it.

Have a pad, with a shelf full of paperbacks, that are MINE to keep, so I can pull one of ’em, out of some fanciful whim and flicker words like “juxtaposition” into the air.

I would like you to

tell me that

I ain’t carrying

no

child

now

whose cries will sound loudly under bright light like the crack of triangles on the emerald tables.

you see,

the CAT’s my one and only,

him being fixed and all.

so, i can’t be pregnant right?

“I would just like to. . .”

**BREATHE**

you know, i’m so tired, my legs seem too weak to hold my weight. I keep getting that queasy feeling that you and your doctors are gonna back me up,

me and my crazy ideas

me and my two hundred,

in cash

and

siphon that baby’s breath

all ’cause

i just can’t hack anything, ANYTHING

anymore,

y’know?

I hear a long pause in the distance . . .

until, abruptly

she says,

“Could you hold please?”



5.7.69

Carlson

## Johnny's Got A Name

Tod A. Colby

Johnny's got a wrench with his friends  
on the street,  
He's opening a hydrant to relieve the heat,  
With wrench in hand,  
Johnny's out all day,  
Johnny's got a wrench—hooray—hooray.

Johnny's got a pill in the palm of his hand  
It's draining his will but he doesn't understand  
He needs a fix just to face the day  
Johnny's got a pill—hooray—hooray.

Johnny's got some cash that he borrowed  
from a friend,  
Now, he's caught in a maze that  
he can't comprehend  
The best way out is just too long a climb  
Johnny's got some cash,  
but he's running out of time.

Johnny's got a gun — he's out to rob a store  
He's already in debt,  
but still he needs more,  
It's fallen all together — he knows  
what it's about,  
Johnny's got a gun, but he's on his way out.

Johnny was shot down all alone in the street,  
He gave the law no choice,  
he would not admit defeat,  
Deserted by his friends, they didn't understand  
Johnny was a flaw within the Master Plan

Johnny's got a name engraved upon a stone,  
He's been running all his life,  
Now he's all alone,  
No one comes to visit,  
No one comes to pray,  
Johnny had a name  
but that was yesterday.



John Callahan



## Predacious Pet

Maureen Wimmer

She steps daintily  
along the low table  
over and between framed smiles  
and leaps silently  
to the windowsill  
stretching her length  
blinking willow eyes  
in the sunlight.

She curls cozily  
on the crazyquilt  
exactly in the middle  
and shows no resentment  
when pushed to one side  
re-curling complacently  
and humming herself  
back to sleep.

She gently raises  
a soft head  
then an arched back  
to welcome a stroke  
and for approval  
she brings  
tiny brown mice  
brightly striped chipmunks  
velvet moles  
and once, a downy bird  
whose only expectation  
of this life  
was to sing its assigned song.





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Prose — Ann Scott, The Matchmaker  
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